NUMB. CCCLXI.

The SPECTATOR.

Tartaream intendit vocem, quâ protinus omnis
Contremuit domus——— Virg.

Thurſday, April 24. 1712.

I Have lately received the following Letter from a Country Gentleman.

Mr. SPECTATOR,

THE Night before I left *London* I went to ſee a Play called *The Humorous Lieutenant*. Upon the riſing of the Curtain I was very much ſurpriſed with the great Conſort of Cat-calls which was exhibited that Evening, and begun to think with my ſelf that I had made a Miſtake, and gone to a Muſick Meeting inſtead of the Play-houſe. It indeed appeared a little odd to me to ſee ſo many Perſons of Quality of both Sexes aſſembled together at a kind of Catter-wawling, for I cannot look upon that Perform nce to have been any thing better, whatever the Muſicians themſelves might think of it. As I had no Acquaintance in the Houſe to ask Queſtions of, and was forced to go out of Town early the next Morning, I could not learn the Secret of this Matter. What I wou'd therefore deſire of you is, to give ſome Account of this ſtrange Inſtrument which I found the Company called a Cat-call; and particularly to let me know whether it be a Piece of Muſick lately come from *Italy*. For my own part, to be free with you, I wou'd rather hear an *Engliſh* Fiddle; tho' I durſt not ſhew my Diſlike whilſt I was in the Play-houſe, it being my Chance to ſit the very next Man to one of the Performers.

I am, SIR,

Your moſt Affectionate Friend,

and Servant,

John Shallow, *Eſq;*

In compliance with Squire *Shallow*'s Requeſt, I deſign this Paper as a Diſſertation upon the Cat-call. In order to make my ſelf a Maſter of the Subject, I purchaſed one the beginning of laſt Week, tho' not without great difficulty, being inform'd at two or three Toyſhops that the Players had lately bought them all up. I have ſince conſulted many learned Antiquaries in relation to its Original, and find them very much divided among themſelves upon that particular. A Fellow of the Royal Society, who is my good Friend, and a great Proficient in the Mathematical part of Muſick, concludes from the Simplicity of its Make, and the Uniformity of its Sound, that the Cat-call is older than any of the Inventions of *Jubal*. He obſerves very well, that Muſical Inſtruments took their firſt riſe from the Notes of Birds, and other melodious Animals; and what, ſays he, was more natural than for the firſt Ages of Mankind to imitate the Voice of a Cat that lived under the ſame Roof with them? He added, that the Cat had contributed more to Harmony than any other Animal, as we are not only beholden to her for this Wind Inſtrument, but for our String Muſick in general.

Another Virtuoſo of my Acquaintance will not allow the Cat-call to be older than *Theſpis*, and is apt to think it appear'd in the World ſoon after the Ancient Comedy; for which reaſon it has ſtill a place in our Dramatick Entertainments: Nor muſt I here omit what a very curious Gentleman, who is lately return'd from his Travels, has more than once aſſured me, namely, that there was lately dug up at *Rome* the Statue of a *Momus*, who holds an Inſtrument in his Right Hand, very much reſembling our Modern Cat-call.

There are others who aſcribe this Invention to *Orpheus*, and look upon the Cat-call to be one of thoſe Inſtruments which that famous Muſician made uſe of to draw the Beaſts about him. It is certain, that the roaſting of a Cat does not call together a greater Audience of that Species, than this Inſtrument, if dexterouſly play'd upon in proper Time and Place.

But notwithſtanding theſe various and learned Conjectures, I cannot forbear thinking that the Cat-call is originally a Piece of *Engliſh* Muſick. Its Reſemblance to the Voice of ſome of our *Britiſh* Songſters, as well as the uſe of it, which is peculiar to our Nation, confirms me in this Opinion. It has at leaſt received great Improvements among us, whether we conſider the Inſtrument it ſelf, or thoſe ſeveral Quavers and Graces which are thrown into the playing of it. Every one might be ſenſible of this, who heard that remarkable overgrown Cat-call which was placed in the Center of the Pit, and preſided over all the reſt at that celebrated Performance lately exhibited in *Drury-Lane*.

Having

Having ſaid thus much concerning the Original of the Cat-call, we are in the next place to conſider the Uſe of it. The Cat-call exerts it ſelf to moſt advantage in the *Britiſh* Theatre: It very much improves the ſound of Nonſenſe, and often goes along with the Voice of the Actor who pronounces it, as the Violin or Harpſicord accompanies the *Italian* Recitativo.

It has often ſupplied the place of the ancient *Chorus*, in the Works of Mr. * * * In ſhort, a bad Poet has as great an Antipathy to a Cat-call as many People have to a real Cat.

Mr. *Collier*, in his Ingenious Eſſay upon Muſick, has the following Paſſage:

I believe 'tis poſſible to invent an Inſtrument *that ſhall have a quite contrary Effect to thoſe Martial ones now in uſe. An* Inſtrument *that ſhall ſink the Spirits, and ſhake the Nerves, and curdle the Blood, and inſpire Deſpair, and Cowardiſe, and Conſternation, at a ſurprizing rate. 'Tis probable the Roaring of Lions, the Warbling of Cats and Scritch-Owls, together with a mixture of the Howling of Dogs, judiciouſly imitated and compounded, might go a great way in this Invention. Whether ſuch Anti-muſick as this might not be of Service in a Camp, I ſhall leave to the Military Men to conſider.*

What this learned Gentleman ſuppoſes in Speculation, I have known actually verified in Practice. The Cat-call has ſtruck a Damp into Generals, and frighted Heroes off the Stage. At the firſt ſound of it I have ſeeen a Crowned Head tremble, and a Princeſs fall into Fits. The *Humorous Lieutenant* himſelf could not ſtand it, nay, I am told that even *Almanzor* looked like a Mouſe, and trembled at the Voice of this terrifying Inſtrument.

As it is of a Dramatick nature, and peculiarly appropriated to the Stage, I can by no means approve the Thought of that angry Lover; who after an unſucceſsful Purſuit of ſome Years took leave of his Miſtreſs in a Serenade of Cat-calls.

I muſt conclude this Paper with the Account I have lately received of an ingenious Artiſt who has long ſtudied this Inſtrument, and is very well verſed in all the Rules of the Drama. He teaches to play on it by Book, and to expreſs by it the whole Art of Criticiſm. He has his Baſe and his Treble Cat-call; the former for Tragedy, the latter for Comedy; only in Tragy-Comedies they may both play together in Conſort. He has a particular Squeak to denote the Violation of each of the Unities, and has different Sounds to ſhew whether he aims at the Poet or the Player. In ſhort, he teaches the Smut-note, the Fuſtian-note, the Stupid-note, and has compoſed a kind of Air that may ſerve as an Act-tune to an incorrigible Play, and which takes in the whole Compaſs of the Cat-call.

** * * Not being yet determined with whoſe Name to fill up the Gap in this Diſſertation which is marked with Aſteriks, I ſhall defer it till this Paper appears with others in a Volume.*

ADVERTISEMENTS.

By Her Majeſty's Company of Comedians,

AT the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane, this preſent Thurſday, the 24th Day of April, will be preſented the Tragedy of Julius Cæſar: With the Death of Brutus and Caſſius. Written by Shakeſpear. All the Parts Diſpos'd to the beſt Advantage. By her Majeſty's Command no Perſons are to be admitted behind the Scenes. And to Morrow, (At the Deſire of ſeveral Ladies of Quality) will be preſented the Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark. For the Benefit of Mr. Booth.

AT the Queen's Theatre in the Hay-Market, on Saturday next being the 26th Day of April, will be preſented an Opera call'd Hydaſpes. For the Benefit of Signor Benedetti Baldaſſari. The Boxes 8 s. Pit 5 s. Firſt Gallery 2 s. 6 d. Upper Gallery 1 s. 6 d. Boxes upon the Stage Half a Guinea. To begin exactly at ſix. By her Majeſty's Command no Perſons are to be admitted behind the Scenes.

☞ Whereas there was lately accidentally diſcovered by an Husbandman at Stimfield near Woodſtock in Oxfordſhire, (a large Pavement of rich Moſaick Work of the Ancient Romans, which is adorn'd with ſeveral Figures alluding to Mirth and Concord, in particular that of Bacchus ſeated on a Panther.) This is to give Notice, that an ex & Delineation of the ſame is Engraven and Imprinted on a large Elephant Sheet of Paper; which are to be Sold at Mr. Charles Lillie's, Perfumer, at the corner of Beauford Buildings in the Strand, at 1 s. N. B. There are to be had at the ſame place at one Guinea each on a ſuperfine Atlas Paper, ſome painted with the ſame variety of Colours that the ſaid Pavement is beautified with; this Piece of Antiquity is eſteemed by the Learned to be the moſt conſiderable ever found in Britain.

This Day is Publiſhed,

Meditations and Prayers to be uſed before, at, and after the Receiving the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The fifth Edition, with many Additions. Printed for F. F. and Sold by Tno. Harbin at the Bible and Anchor in the Lower Walk of the New Exchange in the Strand.

This Day is Publiſhed,

The Iliad of Homer, with Notes by Madam Dacier, Vol. the 2d. The 4th, 5th, 6th and 8th Books tranſlated by Mr. Oldiſ the 7th Book by Timothy, and the 9th Book by Mr. Brome of St. John's Colledge in Cambridge. Printed on a fine Elziver Letter, and illuſtrated with Copper Plates, done by the beſt Gravers from the Deſigns of Plates deſigned by Coypell. Printed for Bernard Lintott at the Cross Keys between the two Temple Gates in Fleetſtreet: Where may be had the 1ſt Vol. Note, the remaining Books of the Iliad are done by Mr. Brome and Mr. Timothy.

To be Sold, the Manors of Southcave and Flaxfleet in Southcave, in the Eaſt-Riding of York, amounting to upwards of 400 l. per Annum. Enquire of Mr. John Greenwood, Attorney in Wood-ſtreet London, or Mr. Fran. Langley in York.

Whereas Mr. Van Noſt's Collection of Figures and Vaſes was laſt Week expoſed to Sale, and ſome part of the ſame unſold. This is to inform the Curious, that there are moſt noble Figures, and Vaſes for Gardens, curious Antique Heads proper to adorn Libraries, to be ſold under the Prime Coſt. Mrs. Van Noſt being reſolved to diſpoſe of the whole; and are to be ſeen at his late dwelling Houſe in Hide Park Road, near the Queen's Mead Houſe, where Attendance is given.

Mr. Vickers, the Clergyman, who cures the King's Evil, lives in Sherburn lane near Lombard-ſtreet.

Four Miles beyond Epping, on the borders of Hertford-ſhire, where the Roads are good, and the Soil healthful, is to be Let, either Furniſhed or Unfurniſhed, a Gentleman's Seat very pleaſantly ſituated, being a very convenient Dwelling Houſe of ſeven Rooms on a Floor, with Garden s and Orchards well planted with Fruit; Stables, Coach-houſes, and other Out-houſes, Fiſh-ponds, &c. Enquire of Mr. Joſeph Gaywood, Goldſmith, at the Dial in the Strand near the Savoy Gate, or of Mr. Nelſon, over againſt the Church in the Old Jewry near Cheapſide.

Loſt three Silver Spoons, with a Creſt a Pelican's Head upon a Ducal Crown, a Silver Salt with a Lozenge ſtarry of ſix parted per Pale, indented and two Eagles diſplay'd, and a Silver If they are offered to Sale you are deſired to ſtop them, and give Notice to Tho. Goodwin, a Bookſeller, over-againſt St. Dunſtan's Church in Fleetſtreet.

Lately Publiſh'd,

A very neat Pocket Edition, Printed with an Elziver Letter, of Paradiſe Loſt a Poem, in twelve Books. Written by John Milton. Printed for Jacob Tonſon at Shakeſpear's Head over against Catherine ſtreet in the Strand.

LONDON: Printed for *Sam. Buckley*, at the *Dolphin* in *Little-Britain*; and Sold by *A. Baldwin* in *Warwick-Lane*; where Advertiſements are taken in; as alſo by *Charles Lillie*, Perfumer, at the Corner of *Beauford-Buildings* in the *Strand*.